

## **BIOGRAPHY – JENNIFER PEREZ COLE**

*Updated: April 28, 2010*

State Director of Indian Affairs Jennifer Perez Cole has accepted a position with the U.S.D.A. Farm Service Agency as the public affairs specialist, outreach coordinator and state civil rights coordinator in the state office located in Bozeman. Her new position will become effective on June 7, 2010. Jennifer was nominated by the Fort Belknap Assiniboiné & Gros Ventre tribes and appointed by Governor Brian Schweitzer and has overseen the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs since November 2007. Her last official day in the Governor's Office will be June 3, 2010.

As Director of Indian Affairs, Jennifer serves on the Governor's cabinet and is the bridge between state government and tribal governments, citizens and organizations to strengthen government-to-government relationships and improve state-tribal communications. Prior to her gubernatorial appointment, Jennifer worked as editor of Fort Belknap News, a tribally-operated newspaper of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. Jennifer graduated from Choate Rosemary Hall, a private preparatory school in Connecticut in 1996, and received her Bachelor of Arts degree in print journalism from the University of Montana in 2001, and also attended Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. and Montana State University-Northern in Havre, Mont. Jennifer was a 2001 Chips Quinn Journalism Scholar and graduated from the Freedom Forum's two-year Associated Press Managing Editors/American Society of Newspaper Editors Fellowship Program in fall of 2003. Her professional journalism career began as a reporter with the Great Falls Tribune until the fall of 2003 and continued in her role as editor of her tribal newspaper.

She and her husband, Skip, have two children, Emma and Frank, and she has two step-daughters, Shelby and Jessie. Jennifer, age 32, was born and raised on a ranch on the Fort Belknap Reservation where she is an enrolled member of the Assiniboiné Tribe.